

#### REMARKS

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-3 have been replaced with new claims 4-6, and it is believed that the new claims are not open to rejection as being indefinite.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 over McCrea in view of Order, in view of Bacchi, in further view of Uhland.

The new independent claim 4 specifies that a card shoe is equipped with a playing card face down value imprint recognition and registration unit and that the monitoring system includes both a playing card face up imprint recognition and registration unit and a playing card face down and face up value imprint comparison unit. Thus, the gaming equipment specified in claim 4 is able to compare the signals received from the playing card face down value imprint recognition and registration unit of the card shoe as cards are drawn from the shoe with signals provided by the playing card face up value imprint recognition and registration unit of the monitoring system and determine whether the cards that are face up on the table match in value the playing cards that were drawn from the shoe.

McCrea discloses apparatus in which a card drawn from the card shoe is recognised and the information is stored in a location corresponding to the hand the card was dealt to. The determined values are used to decide winnings/losses in particular rounds or over several rounds of play. This system will only operate successfully if the value of the card is always correctly recognised.

In practice, recognition systems can produce errors which may be misrecognising a card, not recognising a card relative to its image library, or missing a card, i.e. not reacting to a drawn card.

In McCrea's apparatus if any of these errors occur, this could affect the outcome of the game and hence the calculation of winnings or losses. The automatic control of the game will therefore crash.

Errors in recognition systems do occur as is well known by specialists working in this field. The most reliable card recognition systems presently available in the market have a reliability of 99.99%. This will mean that on average one of every 10,000 cards will be recognised incorrectly, not recognised or missed. In an intense game 10,000 cards can be dealt at a table within about five to six hours, meaning that the McCrea system will crash every five to six hours under busy conditions.

McCrea's system checks cards as they are removed from the table, which will further increase the likelihood of errors being made, but any such errors may only come to light once a round of play is over and winnings or losses have already been awarded. Therefore an error may occur in the initial recognition system, and/or the recognition system once cards are removed from the table or due to foul play, but such errors will generally not be recognised until after the game has finished. This system therefore does not provide for automatic play and winnings calculation for a game in a secure environment. The arrangements in Order and Uhland will also suffer from similar errors in card recognition.

Bacchi discloses a system for monitoring the movement of money and gaming chips. Accordingly, Bacchi does not disclose or suggest monitoring whether a card game is being played correctly, and does not include face up and face down registration and recognition systems.

In contrast the subject matter of claim 4 allows the card readings to be compared and an alarm provided immediately upon a discrepancy being discovered. Accordingly the apparatus of claim 4 enables playing of a game with automatic card recognition but in a safe manner, which is not disclosed nor suggested by the cited prior art.

The subject matter of claim 4 allows multiple readings of a card's value to be taken and compared prior to the value of the card being recorded on the game processing computer. Therefore the present application defines apparatus which provides for

automatic card recognition, but with an appropriate apparatus and connections to enable multiple card recognitions to be made and compared, and appropriate messages to be provided if different recognitions are made, thereby preventing the game from crashing or continuing with an error which could affect the outcome of the game and/or the payment of winnings or losses.

In view of the foregoing, applicant submits that the subject matter of claim 4 is not disclosed or suggested by the cited references, whether taken singly or in combination. Accordingly, claim 4 is patentable and it follows that the dependent claims 5 and 6 also are patentable.

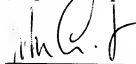
Claim 5 covers the feature that a card being taken from the card shoe has its image recognised and registered a number of times as it is moved from the card shoe to enhance the recognition of the card, and also to provide a safeguard if different recognitions occur. Again the cards are checked during play allowing the game to be stopped and possible manual input of a card's value if necessary.

In considering comparable features in the prior art, Uhland employs a video monitor positioned above the table and thus a very different system. Order does not appear clear in this regard and does not disclose multiple readings of a card and comparison of such readings. McCrea also does not disclose multiple readings of a card and comparison of such readings.

Claim 6 provides for two readings of face up cards from different locations and at different angles. During dealing of cards, the dealer's hands may obstruct the cards from some angles. Also the cards may only be on the table for a very short time, and thus accurate recognition is required. Again none of the prior art describes or suggests two monitoring systems at different angles, with the results being synchronised and recorded during playing or a game to enable unlawful playing of an error to be detected.

For the reasons presented above, applicant further submits that claims 5 and 6 are patentable independently of claim 4.

Respectfully submitted,



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